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Local Port Huron officials give support to outdoor dining legislation

Senate Transportation Committee sends bill to full Senate

LANSING – Three local officials from Port Huron testified before Sen. Jud Gilbert’s Senate Transportation Committee today in support of Gilbert’s bill to allow outdoor dining along a state trunkline right-of-way.

Port Huron Mayor Mark Neal, MainStreet Port Huron Program Manager Janice Dubay and Port Huron City Engineer Robert Clegg testified in favor of the bill before the Committee voted to send the bill to the full Senate for consideration. St. Clair County Commissioners Terry London and Howard Heidemann also attended the hearing and lent their support.

“I introduced this bill on behalf of Port Huron residents and business owners who would like to see outdoor dining continue in the downtown district,” said Gilbert, R-Algonac. “I was very pleased to hear positive testimony on this legislation and look forward to working with the officials and business owners to bring outdoor dining back before the warm weather and summer tourism season begins.”

Senate Bill 234 would revise a 1949 law that prohibits sales in the right-of-way of a state trunkline. The bill would permit business owners to set up outdoor dining areas as long as they did not impede safety or traffic and complied with the other conditions of the permit.

“We feel outdoor dining is vital to the revitalization of Port Huron,” Neal said. “It is another added touch that makes Port Huron unique and brings more people downtown. It’s nice to see people outside enjoying themselves and having a sandwich or coffee.”

“Sidewalk cafes are important to create a great atmosphere in Port Huron,” Dubay said. “MainStreet is working diligently to build a vibrant downtown and one way is by encouraging businesses to set up outside cafes. Sprucing up the downtown area will help improve property values and entice more tourists.”

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Photos of Sen. Gilbert and the committee meeting are available at:

www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/photowire/